

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	09/05/2013
Inspector	Gillian Walters
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	26/10/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is operated by a private organisation and is registered to care for up to four young people. The home provides residential and respite care for young people with learning disabilities.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Young people benefit from well-planned personalised care that takes good account of their individual and highly complex needs. Young people benefit from the patience shown by staff and the efforts made to explore and understand their wishes and requirements. This creates a happy and trusting environment that enables them to feel safe and make good and consistent progress in their lives.

Young people receive positive encouragement and support to develop their communication skills in order that they can successfully contribute and make positive choices concerning their day-to-day care. Good communication between young people, their parents and professionals ensures a holistic approach to all aspects of care planning and daily living routines.

The home is effectively managed by the Registered Manager and her staff team who have high aspirations for the young people in their care. The home's quality assurance arrangements have recently been strengthened, ensuring that effective monitoring is having a positive impact on developments and improvements in the home.

As a result of this inspection some shortfalls were identified in the home's management of records and information. Areas for further attention include the revision of the Statement of Purpose to include essential information; improvement in the quality of young people's records to ensure all necessary documentation is available; and improvement in the quality of handwritten records maintained to ensure they are legible.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
5 (2001)	update and revise the Statement of Purpose, specifically referencing the ethos of the home, the therapeutic techniques used, and the home's policy in relation to anti-discriminatory practice (Regulation 5(a))	20/06/2013
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in the home a record in permanent form which is signed and dated by the author of each written entry. This relates specifically to care plans being appropriately signed and dated. (Regulation 28 (1)(c))	20/06/2013

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that entries in records are legible and clearly expressed. This relates specifically to hand written records maintained concerning incidents of physical intervention (NMS 22.4)
- ensure the results of all statutory reviews and reviews of placement plans are recorded on the child's file. (NMS 25.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people share good relationships with staff. They benefit from the high level of support and encouragement they receive from staff, ensuring that they feel safe and secure in their environment. Young people benefit from staff that are sensitive to their needs and respect their right to make choices. Young people respond positively to the nurturing approach that is promoted within the home and as such make good progress and enjoy the time they spend in the home and with staff.

Young people are all suitably engaged with education and are making good progress in relation to their ability and understanding. Young people benefit from attendance at the Provider's specialist school that provides for young people with mild to severe

autistic spectrum conditions and associated complex learning needs and challenging behaviour. Young people benefit from the home's staff accompanying them into school and supporting them during the school day. This ensures continuity between the home and the school enabling young people to feel reassured and make the most of their learning environment. Young people benefit from the close working arrangements between home and school as common approaches are applied to promote their learning. This consistency of approach and support in developing new skills enables development towards greater independence. One independent reviewing officer commented that the service is 'clearly a resource that is very tuned into the needs of young people.'

Young people enjoy regular contact with family members and friends. This enables them to sustain relationships with those people that are significant and important to them. Young people also benefit from regular contact with school friends that live in the company's other homes. This allows them to enjoy additional opportunities to socialise and access their community. Young people benefit from a wide range of activities and outings provided by the home that enables them to participate in the life of their community and enjoy new and fun experiences.

Young people benefit from excellent attention to and understanding of their health care needs. Thorough assessment, planning and review with relevant health care professionals ensures that young people's health care requirements are thoroughly explored and addressed. The home has established positive relationships with local practitioners and health care specialists that ensure young people receive a high quality service in relation to their specific and complex needs.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **good**.

Young people benefit from living in a nurturing environment where their needs are well understood and accepted. Young people benefit from thorough exploration of their autistic condition and the challenges they experience on a daily basis. This allows the home to plan successfully for young people's complex and specific needs; providing a programme of care that is sufficiently robust to reduce anxieties, enabling young people to have a positive life experiences.

Staff work in partnership with school teaching staff to ensure that effective and preferred methods of communication are consistently used with young people. The home replicates pictorial exchange methods used in school to ensure that familiar communication channels are promoted. The home provides a number of pictorial resources such as a children's guide, fire evacuation procedure and menus to ensure that important information is provided and communication is effective.

Young people's plans are effective in optimising young people's safety and well-being. These are regularly reviewed and updated. Some young people's plans were unsigned and undated. Additionally, documentation relevant to the outcome of recent reviews of plans for some young people was not available. Although these

shortfalls did not have an impact on the immediate care or safety of the young people concerned, they are significant in terms of good practice and the home's responsibility to ensure the availability of a full and complete record in relation to all young people receiving care.

Young people live in a healthy environment that effectively promotes their complex needs. For example, excellent arrangements exist for management and administration of medication that minimise the likelihood of error. Safety is further promoted as the home obtains dispensed monitored doses of medication. This enables the precise number of doses to be safely and hygienically available for administration in the home and also when young people are having contact visits with family. Health care plans are robust and provide appropriate guidance to ensure young people's health needs are met.

Young people are supported to enjoy a wide range of activities that provide good opportunities for fun, exercise and stimulation. Young people benefit from a small outdoor provision of play equipment at the home including trampoline, swings and basketball. They also enjoy regular outings to such as soft play areas, local activity and wildlife parks, increasing their opportunities to experience the wider community. One social worker commented of the provision, 'the social opportunities the staff provide have been brilliant. This young person is able to grow in his independence through shopping trips, activities where he is encouraged to communicate with the public.'

Young people benefit from living in a spacious home that is situated in a quiet residential area close to shops and other local amenities. The home is comfortable and well designed to meet the needs of the young people living there. Young people benefit from highly personalised rooms that are suitable to their specific needs; including specialist weighted quilts and availability of toys. For other young people who are more hypersensitive, furnishings are kept to a minimum to avoid over stimulation and anxiety.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people are appropriately protected by effective arrangements that safeguard and promote their welfare. Staff have good access to information and knowledge of safeguarding procedures to be followed should there be any issues or concerns about the safety of young people. Staff receive training on good safeguarding practice.

Comprehensive behaviour support plans and individual risk assessments are well documented and available for each young person. This ensures that a consistent and supportive approach is taken to effectively manage challenging behaviours. The home has improved the quality of information recorded in relation to incidents when physical intervention has been necessary. However, in some cases, hand written entries made in physical intervention records were not sufficiently legible to assist

the reader.

Young people benefit from high staffing ratios in accordance with their assessed individual needs. As a consequence there have been no incidents of young people running away or being missing from home. However, staff are familiar with relevant procedures and action they should take should such an event occur.

Young people benefit from living in an environment that is safe and secure. A range of environmental and off-site risk assessments are in place to ensure that young people's safety and well-being is promoted in the home and when out with staff in their community. Fire evacuation procedures are well displayed in the home in pictorial format. Fire evacuation drills take place during the day and evening. These measures ensure that young people know and practice what to do in the event of a real emergency. Fire fighting equipment and support systems are regularly checked and serviced.

The home's recruitment and selection practice is sufficiently robust, ensuring that young people are only looked after by those who are safe and competent to do so.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

Young people benefit from a consistent and familiar staff team that is effectively led by a permanent Registered Manager. The home's management arrangements have been recently strengthened. An additional two deputy manager posts have been created and staff been appointed. As the Registered Manager shares her time between this provision and another of the company's homes, this means that there is always a good level of management support available within the home on a daily basis. The staff team is sufficient to meet the needs of the young people.

Staff benefit from regular supervision arrangements and participate in an annual appraisal process that promotes good and effective practice. Staff say they feel well supported and report morale to be good. Staff said of the Registered Manager, 'she leads by example.' Another member of staff commented, 'I have always found managers very supportive, reasonable and approachable.'

Staff receive regular training opportunities and the home ensures that all relevant staff either possess or are working towards a suitable qualification in working with children and young people. The home has a comprehensive training programme in place that ensures that staff have good opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills and update core learning on issues such as safeguarding and behavioural management techniques.

Staff and placing authorities are familiar with the aims and objectives of the home and the services and facilities provided. However, the home's Statement of Purpose does not fully contain all the information required, including details about the ethos of the home, therapeutic techniques used and the home's policy in relation to anti-

discriminatory practice.

At the last inspection on 26 October 2012, there were five requirements and three recommendations made for improvement which led to a judgement of inadequate progress at that time. All requirements and recommendations have since been successfully addressed. This has resulted in the provider strengthening the home's quality assurance arrangements; reviewing the home's process for notifying Ofsted of significant incidents; updating safeguarding policy and ensuring that appropriate support, procedure and guidance is available to staff.

The home is adequately resourced and the provider now has good arrangements in place for the internal and external monitoring of the home. The Registered Manager continues to regularly monitor the quality of care and practice within the home and a new compliance officer has been appointed to undertake monthly visits to the home. The quality of reporting is thorough and detailed and provides a clear action plan for the Registered Manager to address. The Registered Manager has also successfully completed a review of her internal monitoring over a six-month period and forwarded it to Ofsted within the required timescale. As a result of these activities the provider and managers have been able to demonstrate an improved understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses and take action to develop the service.

All significant events since the last inspection have been appropriately dealt with and documented with notifications being made in each case in accordance with the regulation schedule. Although shortfalls are identified in relation to the quality of some handwritten records and the validation of some care plans, young people's records are well organised and mostly well maintained. They provide a good account of the young person's life, experiences and plans for the future. Young people's files are stored securely, preserving their rights to confidentiality and privacy.

About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.